

March 6, 2001

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FDA Commissioner
Docket #00D-1598
FDA Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
5630 Fischers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

Dear Mr. Commissioner,

I'm writing to you regarding FDA Docket #00D-1598, the FDA's regulatory encoding of the laws governing genetically engineered food products, etc. Sir, I spent a number of years studying physics in college, preparing for a degree. I shifted my direction to mathematics, but I have had enough exposure to science to understand its successes as well as its limitations. As an avid student of philosophy I have examined issues of scientific fact very honestly and it seems we must all agree that if there is one truth in science it is that science, as we practice and understand it, as a method of trial and error, can never produce conclusive truth or fact on any subject. We have seen again and again the "failures" of science where it has been used to foster proliferation of agricultural, or other products which alter the matrix of biological organisms. So many times such uses have demonstrated negative consequences that, if not in themselves fully nullify their value, then collectively cause extraordinary degradation of the natural environment upon which we all depend. Clearly, we should apply scientific method to these results in themselves and acknowledge that extreme caution is called for in any arena where life processes are impacted.

It would seem appropriate therefore to refrain from genetic engineering as a viable mode of agriculture. Even in controlled experiments these practices have proven dangerous. We really can't see yet the impacts which this technology will have on us. Clearly anything which alters the fundamental balance of living organisms must be subject to stern scrutiny and strictly prohibited from any use until there can remain no doubt. And we all know that doubt is an ever-present commodity in science.

I would urge you to do all in your power to prevent genetic engineering from entering the marketplace or in any way the living environment of any organic matrix. For myself, I'm completely unwilling to accept genetic food into my body and I should not be forced to do so, which would certainly be the consequence of the current impetus of international corporations and their favorite politicians.

Given these facts concerning the limits of science, it's truly a wonder that we have allowed genetic engineering to get as far as it has. It would seem that the attraction

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of instantaneous, long-lasting and gargantuan wealth has nearly certainly influenced men and women contrary to reason and good will.

At the very least, myself and many others are calling for mandatory labeling and mandatory safety testing of any genetically engineered product.

I leave you with a quote from *Jurassic Park*:

"The basic idea of science – that there was a new way to look at reality, that it was objective, that it did not depend on your beliefs or your nationality, that it was *rational* – that idea was fresh and exciting back [at its start, five hundred years ago], it offered hope and promise for the future, and it swept away the old medieval system which was hundreds of years old. The medieval world of feudal politics and religious dogma and hateful superstitions fell before science. But, in truth, this was because the medieval world didn't really work anymore. It didn't work economically, it didn't work intellectually, and it didn't fit the new world that was emerging.

"But now, science is the belief system that is hundreds of years old. And, like the medieval system before it, science is starting not to fit the world anymore. Science has attained so much power that its practical limitations begin to be apparent. Largely through science, billions of us live in one small world, densely packed and intercommunicating. But science cannot help us decide what to do with that world, or how to live. Science can make a nuclear reactor, but it cannot tell us not to use it. And our world starts to seem polluted in fundamental ways – air and water and land – because of ungovernable science... This much is obvious to everyone.

"... And so the grand vision of science, hundreds of years old – the dream of total control – has died, in our century... Science has always said that it may not know everything now but it will know, eventually. But now we see that isn't true. It is an idle boast. As foolish, and as misguided, as a child who jumps off a building because he believes he can fly."

Thanks for your time,
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